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Provisional summary record of the 16th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 1 July 2008, at 5.45 p.m.

President: Mr. Mérorès ..... (Haiti)

Contents

Development Cooperation Forum (*continued*)

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08-40638 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 6.05 p.m.

Development Cooperation Forum (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development) said that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would continue to provide support for the Development Cooperation Forum. That new mechanism offered an opportunity for stakeholders that might not otherwise be heard to express their views on a variety of aspects of development cooperation, ranging from the political to the technical. Inclusiveness and political legitimacy left the Forum in a good position to improve global dialogue, policy review and mutual accountability.

2. Recalling the six core areas of the Monterrey Consensus, he said that the session of the Forum just ending would provide input for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (Doha Review Conference), to be held from 29 November to 2 December 2008. Policy recommendations from the Forum should also influence the final shape of the Accra Agenda for Action to be submitted for endorsement at the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, which would take place from 2 to 4 September 2008.

3. The Forum was well placed to encourage progress in a range of aspects of international development cooperation as, despite the current emphasis on improving the quality of aid, it was clear that any improvement in that area must be matched by improvements in other development-related areas. The informal country-led high-level symposiums held in Vienna, Cairo and Rome in the run-up to the first session of the Forum had effectively helped to gauge development cooperation gaps and obstacles. The relationships established among stakeholders during those symposiums and during the first session of the Forum would be nurtured and expanded, and Member States would be encouraged to host similar symposiums to prepare the 2010 session of the Forum.

4. The Secretary-General's analytical report on trends and progress in international development cooperation (E/2008/69) proposed in greater detail how the Forum could offer a new way forward for development cooperation. In particular, the Forum should have a unifying theme for each of its sessions, chosen for its high priority and significance to a broad range of stakeholders. It should also be kept in mind that the continued success of the Forum depended on adequate funding and support. The next session of the Forum should help to promote genuine improvements in the impact, coherence and effectiveness of international development cooperation, particularly in terms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

5. **The President** said that he wished to conclude the first session of the Forum by acknowledging the contribution of a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society representatives, parliaments, local governments and the private sector. In order to succeed, international development cooperation should be based on mutually supportive policies for matters such as trade, debt, investment, technology, climate change and food security. Policy coherence across the core areas of the Monterrey Consensus should be pursued.

6. In order to maximize progress towards the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, aid commitments and aid allocation should be examined to ensure that development cooperation received adequate financing, as the current situation revealed insufficient balance across countries and sectors. Criteria for the allocation of aid should be made more transparent, encompassing multidimensional indicators of poverty, structural vulnerability to outside shocks and progress towards the development goals in question. Increases in aid should be focused on agriculture and food security, infrastructure, energy and trade. Donors should increase budget support as a preferred channel of assistance, for its positive effects on national ownership, speed of disbursement and use of national systems.

7. The aid-effectiveness agenda in the run-up to the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the Doha Review Conference should pursue broader agreement through measurable targets for untying aid, reducing conditionality, maximizing concessions and improving transparency. In that connection, the Accra Agenda for Action should demonstrate the ability to move beyond commitments by producing sustainable results and real change in the behaviour of donors.

8. As programme countries were increasingly developing aid policies which gave them the capacity to coordinate and manage aid, donors should support their efforts by providing assistance to build capacity

in connection with aid analysis, policymaking, negotiation and evaluation of results, aimed at a range of stakeholders including those in civil society, parliaments and local government. Concerns regarding the capacity to absorb aid should be resolved by comprehensive joint assessments of bottlenecks, including donor- and programme-country procedures.

9. Effective frameworks to guide country-level development strategies should be established through an inclusive process involving all relevant national stakeholders. As conditionality remained a key concern for most such stakeholders in developing countries, clear targets should be set for reducing such practices sharply. National development strategies, while fully country-driven, should be linked to the internationally agreed development goals. Those goals could not be achieved without non-State financial assistance from civil society, businesses, foundations and global funds.

10. The impact of South-South and triangular development cooperation could be improved by mechanisms for exchanging information and by improved analysis to ensure that experience could be shared. As South-South and North-South development cooperation were complementary, the sharing of experience could promote more widely agreed practices and objectives.

11. Finally, the Forum had the potential to strengthen the voice of programme countries and other stakeholders, cover a broad range of issues which had an impact on the effectiveness of development cooperation, continue to provide independent, high-quality analysis of development cooperation issues and promote mutual accountability. Accordingly, the most appropriate focus for its session in 2010 would be the development of a more inclusive framework to guide development cooperation.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.